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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

China Political Monthly

Top Secret

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5 April 1967

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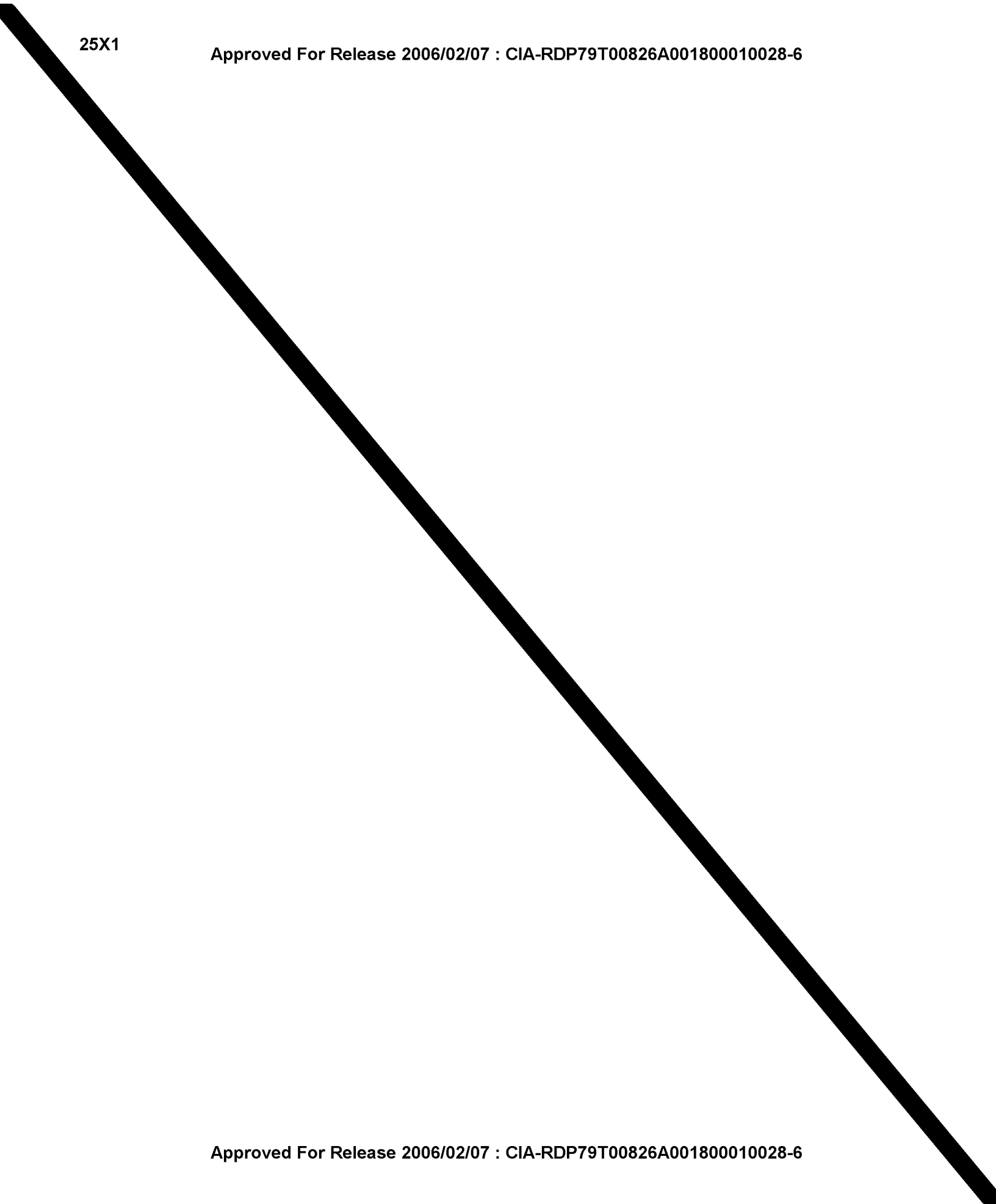

Approved For Release 2006/02/07 : CIA-RDP79T00826A001800010028-6

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Office of Current Intelligence
5 April 1967

MEMORANDUM

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN COMMUNIST CHINA JANUARY TO MARCH 1967*

Contents

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*This memorandum has been produced solely by CIA. It was prepared by the China Division, Office of Current Intelligence.

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I. The War Against Mao's Enemies

An immense struggle has been taking place for many months between the leaders around Mao and an imprecisely defined opposition force composed of "officials who have taken the capitalist road," or, more simply, those who allegedly "oppose Mao." Continuing signs of discord in the leadership in mid-March suggest that the conflict is far from over.

The ultimate objectives of the protagonists, and even their identity, is far from clear. It is certain, however, that there has been widespread disorder and some violence, and that the conflict has embroiled every element of society--the party apparatus, the government machinery, the military, students, workers, and peasants. In January, at the height of disorder, the conflict seemed at times to threaten the unity of the regime.

The drive to bring down "Mao's opponents" in the name of the Cultural Revolution has been going on for more than a year. It has escalated several times. The first casualty was Lo Jui-ching, who is believed to have been chief of secret police, although his public position was army chief of staff. He probably fell shortly after his last public appearance in November 1965. Next to go, in the spring of 1966, were politburo member Peng Chen, party propaganda chief Lu Ting-i, Mao's aid Yang Shang-kun, and Chou Yang, Mao's longtime spokesman on cultural matters.

A new stage was reached at the 11th central committee plenum in August, when Mao's deputy Liu Shao-chi was replaced by defense minister Lin Piao. It now appears that Liu Shao-chi and party general secretary Teng Hsiao-ping were probably shorn of significant political power at that time, although they continued making public appearances with the top leadership through November. Immediately after the 11th plenum, a drive was launched, using Red Guards as the instrument, to bring down a large number of followers of Liu and Teng, both in Peking and the provinces. It was not pressed strongly, however, for reasons that are still unclear, and few people fell.

The drive was renewed and greatly intensified in December, however, when the list of targets was expanded to include virtually every secretary in the regional bureaus and

provinces, a few members of the new Mao-Lin team formed in Peking in August, and, for the first time, key military figures. (Army chief of staff Lo Jui-ching, who had fallen much earlier, was chiefly a party policeman.)

Collectively, Mao's opponents made up a formidable group and were able to create widespread disorder in December and January before they were finally overcome. (A few, mainly party and military leaders in strategic border regions, apparently were able to come to terms with Peking.) Using the weapon of "economism"--economic inducements of various kinds--they incited workers and peasants to strike and disrupt production and transportation services. No major battles broke out anywhere, but numerous bloody clashes between workers and Red Guards were reported.

Despite later charges that Mao's enemies had worked closely together to plot a coup, they appear to have been a loosely knit group. It is also apparent that they could not secure the support of enough military commanders--who held the key to political power--to survive.

The drive against them moved into high gear shortly after the turn of the year. Maoists now refer to that period as the "January revolution." Pro-Mao revolutionaries "seized" party committees in many provinces, and apparently were successful in deposing nearly all the earlier targets in the Southwest, Northwest, and East China regions.

The most startling feature of the "January revolution" was the revelation that several key members of the new Mao-Lin team, seemingly in good standing at least through November, had defected--or been thrust--into the opposition camp about the turn of the year. The major figure was Tao Chu, the former party boss of the Central-South region who was catapulted into fourth place in the hierarchy just below Mao, Lin, and Chou at the 11th plenum. Tao's entire retinue of proteges--both those brought to the capital and those left behind in the Central-South--fell into disfavor with him.

Another politburo figure brought down without warning at this time was Ho Lung, a marshall until ranks were abolished in June 1965, and a member of the party's powerful Military Affairs Committee. Red Guard newspapers and pamphlets named several dozen key military commanders and political commissars

who reportedly fell with Ho Lung or shortly thereafter. They included the commander and commissar of the Peking Military Region--men whose loyalty could be crucial in a power struggle--the commander of the armored forces, many deputy commanders and commissars in the army and navy and in the regional commands, and even the venerable Chu Te who had commanded Mao's armies during the civil war.

The official press in Peking implicitly confirmed Red Guard claims, when it announced that the Cultural Revolution Group in the PLA was reorganized on 11 January and ordered to purge military leaders who had "taken the capitalist road." Liu Chih-chien, the former head of the PLA purge group and deputy head of the army's General Political Department, was immediately accused in Red Guard newspapers of being a member of Ho Lung's counterrevolutionary entourage and was denounced by Lin Piao, Madame Mao, and other leaders.

The sequence of events involving the military in January suggests that mistrust of key military figures may have been the chief reason the army had not been used earlier against Mao's enemies. The purge of unreliable military officers seems to have been largely over by 23 January. 25X1

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Thereafter the purge in the army, or public manifestations of it at least, subsided. Nothing has been heard of the reorganized purge group since January and 25X1 no additional military figures have come under attack in the past month.

Announcements about the "revolutionary committees" formed in several provinces in January and February to replace party committees portray the military as playing a key role not only in the process of "seizing power" but also in administering the new machinery.

Aside from its key role in helping Maoist leaders deal with the opposition, the army has been the regime's chief instrument in restoring order. As early as 18 December, 25X1 Madame Mao had said that the Ministry of Public Security was an unreliable organization and stated that the Ministry, or elements of it, would be taken over by the army.

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By mid-March, the army had become deeply involved in civil affairs throughout the country. It had been ordered to help direct spring farmwork and support industries. Its main function apparently will be to replace the shattered party and government apparatus as the channel by which the party center in Peking transmits policy instructions. The army appears to run the governing machinery in all provinces in the Southwest--Szechwan, Kweichow, Yunnan, and Tibet--in the Northwest province of Sinkiang and the Central-South provinces of Kwangtung and Hupeh. In other provinces the military has a dominant voice.

Although open conflict and violence had largely ended by the end of January, signs of tension within the leadership in Peking continued through mid-March. A well-organized, obviously officially instigated campaign against Vice Premier and politburo member Tan Chen-lin was conducted in Peking from 9 to at least 20 March. Numerous rallies, attended by Red Guards and PLA troops, were held to denounce him. The main charge was that he had tried to curb the Cultural Revolution in the countryside.

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Sporadic poster attacks against two other vice premiers and several lesser government figures have been reported in Peking since 9 March.

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CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY REGIONS